A

SERMON

Preached in an

Anabaptist Meeting

IN

WAPPING,

On *SUNDAY* the 19th. of *February*,

By the Reverend

Upon this Text,

Heb. *Ch.* XI. *v* 1. *Faith is the* **Evidence** *of things not seen.*

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HEB. *Chap.* XI. *Part of the* 1*ſt. verſe.*

Faith is the Evidence *of things not ſeen.*

Dearly Beloved,

WHo was the Author of this famous Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, whether St. *Paul*, as *Cornelius à Lapide* and his Diſciple St. *Jerome* would have it, or whether it was written by ſome other converted *Jew*, which was the opinion of *Alexander ab Alexandro* and ſome other *Lutheran* Divines that oppoſed the proceedings of the Council of *Conſtance* in the ſixth Century, it is not material here to determine. For my part I muſt own that St. *Paul* ſeems to have the faireſt title to it, but tho I have *Sworn* to a thouſand bold things in my time, yet I would not ſwear, Beloved, that this Epiſtle was written by the aforeſaid Apoſtle. But leaving this Controverſie where we found it, let us now proceed to our Text. *Faith is the* Evidence *of things not ſeen.*

From which words I draw theſe four Propoſitions,

Firſt, That *Faith is an* Evidence.

Secondly, *If Faith is an* Evidence, *that an* Evidence *conſequently ought to be beleived.*

Thirdly, *That there are many things talked off in the world, that were never* ſeen.

Fourthly and Laſtly, That *an* Evidence *and through him any Nation, may, nay ought to believe in things* not ſeen.

Firſt, I ſay then that *Faith is an* Evidence. The ſacred Writer of this Epiſtle poſitively aſſerts it, how then dares any man that profeſſes himſelf a Chriſtian, revile, cenſure, and ſpeak contumelious things of any Evidence. I don't ſpeak this becauſe it was my own Caſe to be one of this number, but becauſe the truth requires

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it, and the truth ought never to be ſtifled. An Evidence ought to be reſpected, and his words ſhould in all civilized Nations be received for Oracles, for if Faith is an Evidence why then may not we be *ſaved* by an Evidence as well as by Faith? I believe, my Beloved you remember the time when I was the top Evidence in the horrid Popiſh Plot, but if you don't, I do. When ever I came to *Weſtminſter-Hall*, or to the *Old Baily*, or to any well-affected Coffee-houſe in the City, the people ran in ſhoals to view my perſon, and made a lane for me as I paſſed along. One cry'd make room for the King's Evidence there. How, ſays his Neighbour, is the Gentleman there with his mouth in the middle of his face, he that ſav'd our Wives and Daughters from being raviſhed by the Man of Sin. Thus was I reſpected, and admired by all. Truly I may ſay it without vanity, that little *England*, never ſince it was little *England* had ſo much Faith, as when the Lord made me his unworthy inſtrument to broach the Popiſh Plot at both ends. The Nation believ'd my *Salamanca* degree, and the *White-horſe* Conſult, they believed my Forty thouſand *Pilgrims* with black Bills, and Father *Ireland*'s forty thouſand Maſſes. In ſhort they in effect believed, when I ſaid the words, that Chalk was Cheeſe, and that Cheeſe was Chalk. Theſe were bleſſed times, now my Beloved, for an Evidence to live in. And accordingly then it proſper'd with the Nation for their extraordinary Faith. We hanged up ſcores of Idolatrous Prieſts, and ſent their Biſhops to Graſs; we ſeized their Collars of Brawn for concealed Jeſuits, and their Silver Tankards, and Gold Watches for Popiſh relicks. In ſhort we made the Whore of *Babylon* take down her ſign, ſo that the Proteſtant Religion flouriſhed exceedingly. But when the Nation began once to be poſſeſt with the Spirit of Infidelity, and my Evidence was not received as formerly, obſerve then my Beloved how the Lord powr'd the vial of his indignation upon theſe ſinful people. Popery came upon us like an armed man, and Superſtition over-ran our Paſtures like a Flood. *Magdalen*-College was diſparked and laid out to the Common; the Boys of St. *Omers* bearded us in *Weſtminſter-Hall*, we had four Popiſh Biſhops like the four winds blowing from the four corners of the Map.

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The Monks walked publickly in their Habits; and Carted Bawds had the impudence to ſet up for Converts. This in ſhort was the condition of our Affairs, when my Evidence was rejected, and my Teſtimony turn'd out of doors. Thus I have made it plain that *Faith is an* Evidence.

I come now to the Second point, *If faith then is an* Evidence, *it follows conſequently that an* Evidence *ought to be believed.* The *Talmud* obſerves that the *Prophets* in the old Teſtament were called Evidences and it was a proper title, for they confirmed their meſſages with an Oath. *As my Soul* liveth ſaith *Nathan* to *David* in *Samuel*, to inſtance in no more. Is it not plain and manifeſt therefore, that an Evidence is to be believed? Moreover, as it is ſaid, that *no man is a Prophet is his own Country*, may it not (ſuch is the incredulity of this Apoſtate age) be applied to the Evidences, *viz.* that no man is an Evidence in his own Country. As I told you before, Brethren, my Evidence was received at firſt, and how? why Univerſally, by King, Lords and Commons. I had my Guard of Beef-eaters to protect me from being inſulted or aſſaſſinated, my ten pound *per* Week duly paid without deductions, Veniſon Paſties and Weſtphalia-Hams flew to my Table without ſending for, I was as much ſtared at, at the *Amſterdam-Coffee-houſe* and at *Dick*'s, as a Foreign Ambaſſador, when he makes his entry through *Fleetſtreet*. But when an Unbelieving Generation of Scoffers ſtrated up, of whom the *Obſervator* was the Ring-leader, and began to examine my Narrative with the Carnal Eye of Reaſon; when they were ſo malicious and ill natured as to lay aſide their Faith, and to enquire after the credibility of the things by me depoſed; when they impudently aſſerted that my Plot would not hold water, and that there were ſeveral irreconcileable contradictions in my Book never to be ſolved, then theſe Sons of *Amaleck* neglected me their Deliverer and Saviour, who like *Samſon* ſlew their Enemies with the Jawbone of an Aſs. It fell out unluckily for me, I muſt own that I ſwore Circumciſion, a thing that may eaſily be diſcovered, upon the Miniſter of *Duke*'s place. My forty thouſand *Spaniſh* Pilgrims were improbable Devils with a witneſs, for who the plague could bring ſo many of 'em together? however, though they looked ſo fooliſh and ridiculous,

who could disprove them? whereas to swear circumcision against a man, unless the case had been certainly so, was the greatest folly in the Universe, and if ever I repent, I shall put it among my Retractations. Every Midwife or Matron, nay, in this knowing age a raw Girl of Thirteen can tell whether such an allegation be true, but I may thank the Devil, or if the Devil and a certain Noble person may be put together without a *Scandalum Magnatum*, I may thank a certain Lord too for bringing me into this misfortune, who makes good the Proverb, that all mischief comes out of the *North*. Thus as I said before, the Devil or a certain Lord ow'd me a Spite, and as *in Adam of Paradise all fell*, so I particularly fell in *Adam* of *Duke's Place*, but if I could have seen two yards before me, I had never meddled with that *one eye'd Philistian*, for he prov'd the first step to my ruine. Therefore I wou'd advise you, my beloved, when you are resolved to give a man a civil lift out of this transitory World, that you wou'd have more discretion than to swear Circumcision, or any such palpable matter against him, because a Jury may soon know whether your Testimony be true; but let your *Evidence* relate *to things not* Seen, as Treasonable words, and Treasonable Discourses, and if you stand Buff to such a Charge, 'twill be impossible to convict you of falsity. It was the saying of a great Politician, that as every man was not fit to Swear, so every thing was not fit to be sworn: For an *Evidence*, if he hopes to thrive upon his Trade, ought to have several qualifications. *Imprimis*, he ought to have a *Corinthian fore-head*, for since he must expect to meet abundance of Enemies in the world, 'tis requisite he should be armed accordingly to fence against them. 'Tis a common saying that Diamonds cut Diamonds, why then should not Brass be repelled by Brass? Secondly, he ought to have a *never-failing memory*, for Beloved, 'tis the Devil upon two sticks for an *Evidence* to be caught in two different stories; but in case of a defect here, *Thirdly*, he ought to have a *never-failing invention* to bring him off of the hooks again, when his memory leaves him the lurch. This was once my own case, Brethren. I was asked at the Council whether I knew *Coleman* or no. To which I replied in the affirmative. Soon after a Gentleman was brought into the room, and they asked me whether I had ever

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ſeen him before. No ſaid I, he's an abſolute ſtranger to me. Why ſays one of the Counſellors, this is Mr. *Coleman*. 'Tis even ſo replied I, but that confounded Candle there glared ſo in my face that it made me miſtake; and beſides, the Gentleman has a White Wigg on now, whereas he wore a Black one when I was with him, and that occaſioned me to falter a little. *Fourthly*, an *Evidence* ought to be Maſter of an *inſuperable obſtinacy*, otherwiſe I wou'd not give a braſs Farthing for him. My Brother *Bedloe*, who now is in the boſom of the two *Elders*, that ſwore againſt *Suſannah*, was a Heroe in this particular. He confirmed upon his Death-bed all that he had ſworn to, and pawned his Salvation upon the truth of it. In ſhort, he died as hard as a brick-bat, whereas that puny Milkſop *Prance*, ſwore back-ſtroke and fore-ſtroke about the *Antipendiums* and *Silver-ſcrues*, about the Murder of Sir *Edmunbury Godfry*, *&c.* and owned himſelf by his own voluntary Confeſſion to be a damn'd relenting Villain, and was rewarded accordingly; that is to ſay, he was rejected by the Party whom he ſwore againſt, as likewiſe by thoſe he was converted to. In ſhort, my Beloved, if a man cannot attain to theſe four qualifications, he had as good cry *Matches* and *Brooms* about the ſtreet, or ſet up for a *Chimny-ſweaper*, as well as pretend to be an *Evidence*. So much by way of digreſſion. To return now to the buſineſs in hand, I come next to prove.

Thirdly, That *there are many things talked of in the world, that were never ſeen*. Upon this Head, were I minded to launch out into my Metaphiſics, which I learned at *Salamanca*, I ſhou'd carry the Controverſie ſo far out your reach, that you wou'd ſoon looſe it, but to condeſcend to your weak capacities, you may be pleaſed to obſerve that all things may be divided into the following Branches. Firſt, *ſomethings may be heard that cannot be* Seen, as an Eccho. We hear the reflexion of the ſound, but don't ſee it. We hear likewiſe of honeſt Courtiers, and honeſt Church-men, but they were never ſeen on this ſide of the Globe. I am ſure the man that wou'd ſwear he ever ſaw any ſuch Monſter, will *ſwear* to more than I dare, tho I perhaps I have *ſworn* more than any man in *Europe*. Secondly, *ſome things may be ſeen*, that *cannot be heard*, as dumb a Woman, but Beloved, I muſt tell you, by the by, that a dumb Woman is next too

a Miracle. I cou'd never meet with a Woman yet in all my Travels but had more tongue than I thought came to her ſhare. Thirdly, *ſome things may be both ſeen and heard*, as a Scolding Wife. Heaven grant that we have not too many of that ſort in this righteous Congregation. Laſtly, *ſomethings are neither to be ſeen nor heard*, as for inſtance, the Muſic of the Spheres, and to go no farther, my forty thouſand *Spaniſh Pilgrims* with their black Bills. Having as I take it ſufficiently cleared this point, I now proceed to make out my laſt Propoſition, which was,

Fourthly, That *an* Evidence, *and through him any Nation may, nay, ought to believe in things not* Seen. There are ſome perſons in the world ſo extremely difficult and hard to pleaſe, that they will believe nothing, but what falls under the cognizance of their ſenſes. A true *Cheapſide*-Husband will never believe that his Wife has cornuted his Fore-head, unleſs he finds her and the Gallant in bed together. My Father *Samuel O——es* the Weaver, (and what mortal man is exempt from humane frailties) was of this Kidney, as it appears by a ſtory of him in *Edward's Gangrena*, and was for ſeeing, and not believing. He was Spiritual director to ſome Godly Women, and carried them to the River near *Chelmsford*, to ſee them waſh off original Sin, and be Baptiſed. One of the Company, who was more ſhamefac'd than the reſt of the Siſterhood, after ſhe had undreſſed her ſelf to go and waſh, laid both her hands upon her Nudities to cover them, one hand it ſeems not being large enough to do it: But my Father *Sam*, who was reſolved to *ſee* all or nothing, as you will find in the aforeſaid Book, made her take off her unrighteous hands, and when that was done, he went on with the Ceremony. This, I ſay, is the Caſe of moſt men; they will truſt their Faith no farther than they can ſee it: but I wou'd fain know whether an **Evidence** is beholding to a Nation, if they will believe no more of his Narative, than what they have ſeen with their Eyes. A true **Evidence** will trump up ſeveral things that were never ſeen, and it may be, that were never heard of, and if they have a mind to be ſaved by him, they muſt depend upon his veracity, and ask no more queſtions. But, Alas! this is a very ungrateful World we have to deal with, ſo that if it were not for the private ſatisfaction

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which every good Evidence feels within his own breaſt for doing a National Service, he would much ſooner take up with the ſcurvy employment of a Hog-driver. For, is it not a ſad thing, dearly Beloved, that where a man generouſly offers to hang half for a Kingdom, and conſequently to eaſe it of a World of troubleſome fellows, that are a burden to it, he ſhou'd be brow beaten by a ſawcy Judge, or croſs-examined by any of your impertinent Counſellors that will have an Oar in every man's Boat, and at laſt, for twelve illiterate Raskals, call'd the Jury, to bring in the Bill *Ignoramus* forſooth, after a man has been at the expence of contriving and tacking together a plauſible ſtory, and perhaps ſwore till he is black in the Face? I wou'd have hanged Sir *George Wakeman*, and the *Popiſh Lords*, and *Parſon Eliot*, and a thouſand more that I cannot think of at preſent: But the Government I thank them, were ſuch fools as to obſtruct my deſigns. For my part, I did all that lay in the power of an Evidence to do, but ſome perſon that ſhall be nameleſs, wou'd not let me go through ſtitch with my work, and therefore if Popery is not ruined, root and branch, they have none to blame but themſelves. They would not reverſe my Sentence when it might have been for the common advantage, and when my Friends ſolicited it: So now I don't care a groat if it continues on till to the end of the Chapter, for tho' perhaps I may not meet with my *due reward* in *this* World, yet thoſe that throughly know me, ſay, I ſhall certainly find it in the next.

Having, I preſume, cleared theſe four points to your ſatisfaction, give me leave to ſay a word to ſome Objections that may be raiſed, either againſt the Truth of my Evidencing, or the freedom of my Language, in calling a Spade a Spade: Or, Laſtly, againſt my leaving the Church of *England*, whereof I have profeſſed my ſelf to be a Member ſeveral years, to return to the Religion of my Forefathers, and joyn my ſelf with the Brethren of the Anabaptiſt perſwaſion.

Object. the Firſt. If, Doctor, your Evidence was true? ſay theſe Gentlemen, how came it about then, that among ſo many Prieſts and Papiſts of all ſorts that you hanged, not one of them ſhould own the Crime for which he was brought to the Gallows? but make a per-

pendicular leap to Hell with a lie in his mouth: whereas, say they, in *George P —— r*'s Plot, all of them had the Grace to confess the fact for which they died.

To this I answer. First, It is plain from *Suarez*, *Escobar*, and the whole Herd of their Casuists, that a Roman Catholick may equivocate and perjure himself for the good of the Church. This I take to be so notorious a truth that I defie any Raskal of a Jesuit to deny it. But People will reply, If this is the standing Doctrine of that Communion, how came *Charnock* and *Rookwood* to be without it? or why should they squeak any more than their Predecessors. Therefore I affirm, Secondly, That the seasons have been so confused an ddisturbed, and jumbled ever since the late Earth-quake, that as that great *Philosopher* Mr. *Flamsted* believes, perhaps the Axis of the Earth is not where it formerly stood. So then, if so solid a body as the Earth has been removed from its center, what wonder is it if the Church, which is compoſed of weak, wavering, uncertain men, has likewise varied a little from its principles. I could have wished indeed, that all, or at least some of my Raskals had done the same as Captain *P ——— r*'s Rogues have done, for it might have served to corroborate my Evidence: however, its my comfort that the Nation believed me without it, and as we find it in the Text, *Faith is the Evidence of things not seen.*

Object. the Second. But, Doctor, if you are a sincere Christian, say they, why then don't you take more care to clap a Padlock upon that unruly member your Tongue? Why do you call Rogues and Raskals so plentifully, since the Gospel tells us, that the man that uses this Pagan Language, even to his Enemies, will be troubled for't hereafter?

The answer to this is easie and plain. We must so interpret Scripture, as not to make one part of it clash with another. Now we are positively commanded in several places to speak the truth of all persons, so that if a great man at Court, or a Prelate in the Church happen to be Raskals, pray whose fault is it to give them their true titles? My Father *Samuel* was an honest Weaver, and his Son *Titus* here will be Crucified over and over before he will turn the Devil's Upholsterer, and sow Cushions to the Elbows of iniquity, tho' it

it wears a Star and Garter. Beſides, when this Precept of not cal-
ling our Brother Fool, and ſo forth, was given, the Church was but
in it's Cradle or Infancy, and if it had any Rogues, they were but
little diminitive ones, whereas the Church is now grown to Wo-
man's Eſtate, and conſequently many of its Children have arriv'd
to their full Stature in Raskality, and this I take to be the Caſe.

The third, and, as they imagine, the moſt terrible Objection is ſtill behind. For, Doctor, ſay theſe Gentlemen, pray do us the favour to tell us what Church you belong to, that we may know where to find you. Firſt you were a plain Primitive Proteſtant of the Anabaptiſt Cut. Then you faced about to the Religion then in faſhion, went to the Univerſity, and took Orders in the Church of *England*. After that, you made a Trip to St. *Omers* and *Salamanca*, ſwallowed the Euchariſt as glibly as your Father did the *Scotch* Covenant, and were a moſt zealous Papiſt. This wou'd not ſatisfie your turn, but in a few years, you veer'd about to the old Point, and hanged all the Prieſts and Jeſuits that came in your way. Then you ſhowed a ſtrange warbling in your Guts to be a Presbyterian. Now at laſt you herd among the Anabaptiſts on *Sundays*, but all the week wear the ungodly Livery of the Eſtabliſh'd Church: So that, ſay they, you are a perfect riddle and myſtery to us, *and the Devil only can tell where to have you.*

To this heavy charge I reply, that ever ſince I knew my right hand from my left, I carefully obſerved the Golden Rule of being ill to all men, that I might gain ſome—mony. As for my going to St. *Omers*, and pretending to be a Proſelyte to their Church, 'twas a meer trick of Youth, and no more, I only did it with a deſign to fathom their dark Intregues, and if poſſible to break the neck of them, which I think I perfectly perform'd, for I truſs'd up their Prieſts by dozens. In conſideration of theſe Services, the Nation gave me a title not inferiour to that of the greateſt Heroes, and call'd me their Saviour, and Deliverer. If Papiſts will equivocate with us Proteſtants, why ſhould not we Proteſtants turn their equivocating Canon upon them, and maul them with their own Arms. *Judith* cut off *Holofernes*'s Head, but how? not with her own Sword I trow, becauſe ſhe was a Woman, and wore none, but with *Holofernes*'s own tilter,

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and yet we find her commended for it. But then ſay they, if it had been your luck to have trooped off when you lived in an Idolatrous Communion, what had become of you then? Why! perhaps I had been damned, but what of all that? If I had a mind to hazard the going to the Devil, in order to ſave the Nation, I humbly conceive they ought to thank and not reproach me for it. I am ſure a great Miniſter has ſince done the ſame, and made me the compliment to follow my Copy. To conclude, I have at laſt thought fit my Beloved, to ſettle among you, in obedience to the Apoſtles command, *Try all things, and hold faſt that which is good*: for really I find the men of your perſwaſion are good, and the women are good, and likewiſe your refreſhments and Collations are good, yea exceeding good. In the next place my Father was one of you, and like an obedient Son, I am returned to his way of worſhip, and this nature teaches the very Inſects. Obſerve a Summer fly in *May*, and after he has flown and buzzed about for ſome time, you will find him at laſt by downright inſtinct, as it were ſettle in the original Cowturd, where he was hatched. And be not ſcandalized I beſeech you, that on the week-days I wear the rag of the Church. The malicious world tells a thouſand lies of me, but I value them not. Thus they formerly charged me with the ſin of *Rigbeiſm* (as they now call it) and to ſtop their mouths, I was forced to marry, and yet theſe cenſorious perſons are not ſatisfied with my doing ſo, but ſtill give out that I am for the old Sport, becauſe forſooth, I have ſtruck never a Child ſince out of my Wives Body, not conſidering that I am too Fat and Corpulent for that Drugery. Now if on the week-day I appear in the Canonical equipage, 'tis only done with an intention to diſgrace it. They whipt my ſides for me, and I have no other way to requite them for't, but by wearing their habit, in order to bring them into Diſgrace and Contempt, which that it may happen to them, let us all Pray, and every one of us lend a hand, to bring about ſo pious a Work.

FINIS.

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